Chapter V

Human Maker and Divine: 
The First Epistle of the First Book of Horace, Imitated

Horace’s first epistle is a clever protest to his friend and patron, Maecaenas, to explain why he no longer has time for poetry. With characteristic good humor, he points out that he is too old for such trifles; his time must now be spent on the far more important pursuit of truth—“Quid verum atque decens, curo & rogo, & omnis in hoc sum” (11). In the Renaissance, this noble aim won almost universal praise for Horace’s poem. Christoforo Landino, for instance, takes this epistle as the occasion for an effusive dedication to Guido Feltri, in the course of which he praises philosophy and wisdom, links Horace’s name with such figures as Socrates, Orpheus, and Amphion, and extravagantly lauds him as a great teacher and the wisest of poets—“omnium poetarum sapientissimum.” Badius Ascensius introduces the epistle by stating that in it Horace urges the pursuit of virtue and holy wisdom (“sapienta sancta”); that is, what pertains to decent actions and a holy life. Such criticisms as these are the spiritual parents of Pope’s poem. Horace had to depend for the formulation of his ethical norms on reason alone; Pope had both reason and faith—more specifically, in the case of this Imitation, he had both Horace and the Bible, and a commentary tradition, culminating in Dacier, that united the two.

Dacier’s commentary may be viewed as the end product of the entire Renaissance effort to understand and assimilate the art of ancient Rome. Pope’s reliance on it here, his exploitation of its ideas, places him directly in the main channel of Renaissance thought and makes of this Imitation
not only a brilliant poem but a major statement of that culture's view of the role of poets and poetry.

At the center of the poem lies the core conception of the religion of avarice, a worldly belief that detail by detail parodies orthodox Christianity. Enveloping this are the presence and persona of Pope as true poet and true Christian, now bidding farewell to that perverse world, preparing himself for death and judgment, and, under the guidance of Wisdom, adding the final touches to his last and best work, his own soul. The poem progresses from the carnality of the worldly to the spirituality of those "whom Wisdom calls her own," and closes with the merging of human and divine creators.

I

Horace's valediction to trifles becomes in Pope's hands a careful assessment of, and farewell to, a world inhospitable to virtue and to poets. The poem's partitio indicates clearly the direction the body of the epistle is going to take. Its subject matter is sin, its recognition and its cure.

Say, does thy blood rebel, thy bosom move
With wretched Av'rice, or as wretched Love?
Know, there are Words, and Spells, which can controll
(Between the Fits) this Fever of the soul:
Know, there are Rhymes, which (fresh and fresh apply'd)
Will cure the arrant'st Puppy of his Pride.
Be furious, envious, slothful, mad or drunk,
Slave to a Wife or Vassal to a Punk,
A Switz, a High-dutch, or a Low-dutch Bear—
All that we ask is but a patient Ear.

(55-64)

The passage catalogues all seven of the deadly sins—pride, anger, lust, envy, gluttony, sloth, and avarice. The corresponding Horatian passage (32-40) contains the same
list, which had been traditionally recognized as the counter­
part of the Christian deadly sins; Ascensius, for example, 
notes simply and tersely that they are "septem peccata 
mortalia." The first listed sin, avarice, is the subject of 
Pope's attention in this epistle. As in previous poems, it be­
comes symbolic of all earthly desire and representative of all 
sin. Pope is on sound theological ground in attributing such 
importance to avarice; there is a divergent tradition that 
viewed it rather than pride as the chief of deadly sins, and 
Pope appears to be manipulating that body of opinion for 
his own ends in this epistle.

This same section not only proposes the poem's theme, 
but it also singles out the person who is to be the exponent 
of the sin of avarice. Pope has by means of his index guides 
linked Horace's Amator (38) with "Slave to a Wife or Vass­ 
sal to a Punk" (62)—both of which characters fit George II 
precisely. Queen Caroline's ascendancy over her husband 
was common knowledge, and provided much political fodder 
for the opposition. Equally notorious was George's infatua­ 
tion for Madame de Walmoden, with whom he spent several 
politically costly months in 1737. Pope has slyly hit at this 
peccadillo earlier in the poem; he has carefully altered the 
gender of the betrayed in the line "Long as the Night to her 
whose love's away" (36) so that it points to Caroline and her 
errant husband rather than to Horace's generalized and male 
lovers (20). Lest there be any doubt at whom Pope is here 
directing his satire, the concluding nationality of the very 
next line unequivocally fixes the barb to George: "A Switz, 
a High-dutch, or a Low-dutch Bear" (63). The linking (by 
means of the index guides) of this last phrase with Horace's 
emphatic "Nemo adeo ferus" (39) places it beyond all ques­ 
tion that George is the sinner intended. The coupling of 
avarice at the head of a list of the deadly sins and George II 
at its foot reveals that Pope is employing avarice as meta­ 
phor for all the sins, and his king as their prime human 
exponent. George's somewhat questionable political pre­ 
eminence wins him a corresponding moral "bad eminence."
The process approximates that of the other Imitations in thereby equating political and moral offenses, and in viewing George as the appropriately sinful king of a worldly and avaricious society.

The central portion of Pope's poem is concerned with investigating and detailing the mores of the world governed by George II. It posits a strict opposition between the ideal life of wisdom and the practices of a people corrupted by greed.

Here, Wisdom calls: "Seek Virtue first! be bold!
"As Gold to Silver, Virtue is to Gold."
There, London's voice: "Get Mony, Mony still!
"And then let Virtue follow, if she will."
This, this the saving doctrine, preach'd to all,
From low St. James's up to high St. Paul;
From him whose quills stand quiver'd at his ear,
To him who notches Sticks at Westminster.

(77-84)

This passage is typical of the poem's method and texture; its smooth and apparently straightforward surface statement is enriched and strengthened by its allusional content and by the commentary tradition that lies behind it. Its very first lines incorporate biblical references that expand the dichotomy far beyond the Roman poet's range and define Wisdom in a way far more significant than pagan prudential knowledge.

Get Wisdom because it is better than gold: and purchase prudence, for it is more precious than silver. (Prov. 16:16)

And again:

Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. (Prov. 4:5-7)
The specific mention of Wisdom, as well as Pope's obvious parody of the scriptural "Get wisdom, get understanding" in his "Get Mony, Mony still" (79), firmly secures the presence and effectiveness of the allusion.

The Wisdom in question is not merely the human attainment; rather it is that female figure (Sapientia, Sophia) who haunts the pages of the Old Testament, and whom the biblical commentators identified with the Son, the Logos, the second person of the Trinity. She represents, in one aspect, Sapientia increata, the indwelling wisdom of God, and in this guise she is equivalent to the Logos, the creating Word of God. In her other aspect, she appears as Sapientia creata, that ray of divine wisdom which is imparted to the faithful, and is so linked with Christ, the incarnate God-man. The wisdom she personifies is the specifically Christian knowledge that transcends the limited human wisdom of the pagans; she is the higher wisdom that Christ imparted to men, the wisdom that is attained only through the imitatio Christi, the conforming of oneself to the life of Christ. Wisdom is thus both a model and a goal for men. In life, she was to be formed in the soul as Sapientia creata; after death, she would be seen and comprehended in the beatific vision as Sapientia increata. She is the spotless mirror of the Fortescue, of which Pope's life and art were partial reflections. Her overt presence in this poem provides a norm for judging the activities of the worldly that goes well beyond Horace's rational ethic and damns them far more completely. It calls into play one of the central metaphors of the poem, the opposition of spiritual and material wealth, and insures, by the simple strength of biblical authority, that the greedy citizens of London be recognized as totally depraved sinners, who have perversely chosen to gain the world and lose their souls. All this is the logical continuation of the moral stance implied in Pope's initial classification of their aberrations as sins rather than as breaches of decorum.

Once more, it is important to recognize that these are essentially commonplace ideas that Pope is dealing with, ideas
that the eighteenth century felt entirely congruent to its conception of Horace. Dacier's commentary is at this point especially relevant; he makes the same distinction Pope makes, in almost the same terms that Pope uses, and in addition provides the biblical parallel that the English poet incorporates.

Vilius argentum est auro, virtutibus aurum. C'est ce que la Sagesse crie aux hommes: Vous courez les mers pour gagner de l'or & de l'argent, & vous ne voulez rien faire pour acquérir la vertu; cependant la vertu est plus précieuse que tout l'argent & que tout l'or du monde. C'est que Salomon dit dans le même sens, & en suivant la même figure: Melior est acquisitio ejus negotio res argentii et aurii, primo & pristinum; fructus ejus pretiosior est cunctibus opibus, & omnia quae desiderantur huic non valent comparari. "L'acquisition de la sagesse est meilleure que tout l'or & l'argent que l'on gagne dans de commerce; ses fruits sont plus utiles & plus purs, elle est plus précieuse que toutes les richesses: & tout ce qui peut être l'objet des désirs des hommes ne fauroit lui être comparé."

O cives, cives, quaerenda pecunia primum est si la Sagesse crie d'un côté aux hommes, la vertu vaut mieux que l'or; la Folie leur crie d'un autre côté, l'or vaut mieux que la vertu. Et comme la Sagesse est seule, & que la Folie a toujours après elle une foule de gens qui repètent ce qu'elle dit, il ne faut pas s'étonner si la voix de la première n'est pas entendue, & si celle de l'autre est suivie. Tout ce passage est fort beau, mais le tour, qui en est fort brusque, a été cause qu'on ne l'avait pas bien éclairci.  

Dacier's opposing voices are Wisdom and Folly, Pope's are Wisdom and London; but they amount to the same thing, and what they are respectively urging is identical. The savant's mention of la Sagesse and his citing of the passage from Scripture bring to bear upon Horace's poem the very same ideas about Wisdom that Pope calls into play in his own epistle. There can be no doubt about the nature of the Wisdom to which Dacier refers; in an earlier note, he has already identified her as "l'esprit de Dieu." She is unquestionably the same figure in exactly the same guise that she
wears in Pope’s Imitation. The biblical exegetes provide even further evidence of the eighteenth century’s readiness to view Horace in this specifically Christian light, and of the traditional nature of the concepts Pope is employing. Cornelius à Lapide, in his commentary on the biblical passages Pope utilizes, contrasts their counsels with the worldly-minded of whom Horace speaks, and quotes directly the pertinent lines—“quaerenda Pecunia primum est,/ Virtus post nummos.”

The Protestant commentator Matthew Poole makes exactly the same association and quotes the same Horatian lines.

The presence of the Wisdom figure and the ideas she personifies provides Pope’s poem with the stable point necessary on which to turn a neat and logical inversion. If to heed Wisdom’s voice, to assimilate oneself to her, is the proper duty of a Christian, then those who choose to follow the opposite, London’s way, are not merely un-Christian, but arrantly anti-Christian. This conception informs Pope’s entire treatment of the avaricious. They are all seen within the context of a coherently developed antireligion that perverts point by point the tenets of orthodox Christianity. The beginnings of this pattern may be seen even in the cataloguing of George II as an eighth deadly sin; instead of kingship by divine right, he seems to hold his crown by some sort of diabolical succession. So it is in this section of the poem, where London’s advice is pointedly opposed to divine Wisdom’s and revealed as a complete inversion of the scriptural counsel, that the sources of that corruption are closely associated with the court—“From low St. James up to high St. Paul;/ . . . /To him who notches Sticks at Westminster” (82–84). And to describe that corruption itself, Pope ironically borrows terminology from orthodox religion; it becomes a “saving doctrine, preach’d to all” (81), yet another inversion of the proper pattern of salvation. It seems even, by its inclusion of St. James and St. Paul, to pervert the doctrinal content of the New Testament epistles.

Of a piece with all this is the fact that all three indicated loci
This conception is further elaborated by the succeeding verse paragraphs, and additional details of the extent and nature of the process of inversion are given.

BARNARD in spirit, sense, and truth abounds.  
"Pray then what wants he?" fourscore thousand pounds,  
A Pension, or such a Harness for a slave  
As Bug now has, and Dorimant would have.  
BARNARD, thou art a Cit, with all thy worth;  
But wretched Bug, his Honour, and so forth.

Yet every child another song will sing,  
"Virtue, brave boys! 'tis Virtue makes a King."  
True, conscious Honour is to feel no sin,  
He's arm'd without that's innocent within;  
Be this thy Screen, and this thy Wall of Brass;  
Compar'd to this, a Minister's an Ass.

And say, to which shall our applause belong,  
This new Court jargon, or the good old song?  
The modern language of corrupted Peers,  
Or what was spoke at CRESSY and POITIERS?  

(Pope's satiric assault is now continued against the court by name rather than by intimation. The virtuous king of the children's song (92) stands out in glaring contrast to the actual king of England and his sinful affiliations. The same is true of the perverse "Honour" of "wretched Bug" (90), which amounts to the complete antithesis of "True, conscious Honour" (93); the adjective that describes Bug links him succinctly with the "wretched Av'rice" (56) that is the root of all this sin. The honest song of the children (and the "song" that is Pope's poem?) is further contrasted with what had been previously named "London's voice" (79),
and is now recognized as "The modern language of corrupted Peers" (99). England's political corruption is revealed by the difference between that speech and "what was spoke at CRESSY and POITIERS" (100). George's reign and Walpole's controversial peace policies show but poorly alongside the victories of England's hero kings. Pope's own attitude toward Henry V and Edward III is made clear in his Epistle to Augustus, where George is ironically declared their superior.

Edward and Henry, now the Boast of Fame,
And virtuous Alfred, a more sacred Name,
After a Life of Gen'rous Toils endur'd,
The Gaul subdu'd, or Property secur'd,
Ambition humbled, mighty Cities storm'd,
Or Laws establish'd, and the World Reform'd;
Clos'd their long Glories with a sigh, to find
Th' unwilling Gratitude of base mankind!

Edward and Henry had connotations for the political battles of the 1730's that make their presence here extremely telling. In contrast to opposition charges that George was a tyrant, Edward and Henry were held up as careful protectors of English freedoms and rights.\(^{15}\) By calling attention to them here, Pope has once again invoked his persistent equation of moral and political offense, and shown that George's inversion of orthodox religion and the king's divine commission is paralleled by his destruction of traditional English liberties. It is for this very reason that Bug is pictured as possessing a "Harness for a Slave" (87); under a tyrant king, all Englishmen are slaves.

Naturally enough, other prominent members of the government of which George is the spiritual head are also allotted their share of the satire. Walpole particularly is singled out for censure; the mention of minister, the easily made Wall-Walpole pun, and particularly the use of the word...
“Screen” (95), all point directly to the chief functionary of George’s government. In the opposition press, Walpole was frequently saddled with the charge of protecting or screening those involved in public swindles, particularly with regard to the abortive attempt to investigate the doings of the South Sea Company. This and Walpole’s notorious practice of bribery have obvious relation to the poem’s insistence upon avarice as the besetting sin of England and upon George’s court as the source of it. Sir Robert’s unconcealed and often unashamed actions in these and similar matters are more than sufficient to warrant a pun on “Wall of Brass” (95); his conduct was nothing if not brazen, and his protection depended on brass—money. More scathing satire than this, however, is called into play by those words. Just as George is the antithesis of a virtuous and divinely ordained king, Walpole is the complete perversion of a holy and divinely ordained minister. Pope’s adaptation of Horace’s “murus aheneus” (57) incorporates the correspondence between that phrase and an identical one in Scripture—a correspondence that, once again, the biblical commentators both recognized and noted:

For behold I have made thee this day a fortified city and a pillar of iron and a wall of brass, over all the land, to the kings of Juda, to the princes thereof and to the priests and to the people of the land. (Jer. 1: 18)  

As Jeremiah was the God-appointed prophet and minister to the king and people of Judah, so Walpole, in the world-turned-upside-down that Pope has delineated, is the diabolical prophet and minister to the sinful king and people of England. By virtue of the biblical allusion, Walpole is revealed to be the anti-prophet of an anti-king in an anti-Christian society; he is dedicated to preaching the doctrine of avarice rather than the counsel of Wisdom. This is why his protection is so pointedly contrasted with the innocence of those who “feel no sin” (93). The words of the scriptural passage are God’s announcement to Jeremiah of his des-
tined mission; the words of Pope's epistle are his description of Walpole's evil task in a degenerate England.

The same sort of gross inversion takes place in the verse paragraph that treats of Barnard and "wretched Bug" (90). Such commentators as Landino had taught the Renaissance to see in Horace's listing of *animus*, *mores*, *lingua*, and *fides*, (54) the possession of *sapientia* and *virtutes morales*. Pope's translation of these as "spirit, sense, and truth" (85) seems to owe its wording to Christ's prediction that "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4: 23), which exegetes are unanimous in judging to be the essence of proper devotion to God. Barnard, although abounding in these virtues, simply because he lacks the money necessary to buy respect and place, is doomed to be a vulgar "Cit" (89), while Bug is deemed "his Honour, and so forth" (90). In the world's view, true worship and true worth are not simply insufficient; they are nothing at all. Money is the measure of all things, and honor follows it, even to ornament "such a Harness for a slave/As Bug now has" (87-88). A materialistic England consistently follows its own sinful will in preferring mere riches to spiritual and moral wealth.

Pope's satiric attack on George and the court culminates in a fierce and explicit denunciation of both as the epitome of evil.

Who counsels best? who whispers, "Be but Great,
"With Praise or Infamy, leave that to fate;
"Get Place and Wealth, if possible, with Grace;
"If not, by any means get Wealth and Place."
For what? to have a Box where Eunuchs sing,
And foremost in the Circle eye a King.
Or he, who bids thee face with steddy view
Proud Fortune, and look shallow Greatness thro':
And, while he bids thee, sets th' Example too?
If such a Doctrine, in St. James's air,
Shou'd chance to make the well-drest Rabble stare;

[161]
If honest S'z take scandal at a spark,
That less admires the Palace than the Park;
Faith I shall give the answer Reynard gave,
"I cannot like, Dread Sir! your Royal Cave;
"Because I see by all the Tracks about,
"Full many a Beast goes in, but none comes out."
Adieu to Virtue if you're once a Slave:
Send her to Court, you send her to her Grave.

(101-19)

The court is the grave of virtue. What should be God's ordained king is a beast who devours the virtuous and makes of his depraved followers slaves of the order of Bug—whose name, like the metaphor "lion" applied to George, indicates his fall from the human to the animal. In point of fact, George and Bug are even more closely linked by Pope's Bear-bugbear-Bug pun, which extends over some twenty lines of the poem. George is initially referred to as "a Low-dutch Bear" (63); shortly after this, while pointing out which constitutes the greatest offense in the eyes of the world, Pope phrases it so:

But to the world, no bugbear is so great,
As want of figure, and a small Estate.

(67-68)

I would suggest that the specific "bugbear" referred to here is once again George II; "want of figure" captures exactly George's own corpulence, and the "small Estate" in question characterizes Hanover nicely, particularly since, in 1737-38, George's partiality for that duchy made it quite a formidable bugbear for the English portion of the world.20

Pope's theological punning on the words "Grace" (103), "scandal" (112), and "Doctrine" (110) exploits the implications of the antireligion he has posited. The inversion is made apparent by the fact that the proper doctrine of temperance and freedom from thralldom to the world gives
"scandal" to an ironically "honest S*z" (112), whose position as Keeper of the Privy Purse would naturally render him one of the most influential promulgators of the avaricious gospel of George and Walpole. Even the goal of all this sinful striving, "to have a Box where Eunuchs sing,/ And foremost in the Circle eye a King" (105–6), reflects far more than Pope's simple conviction that opera is a degenerate art form. Given the terms of the inverted religion, these lines imply a gross parody of the orthodox Christian's final reward, the vision of the harmony of the heavenly king. The idea is, of course, a homiletic commonplace, but perhaps Milton's poetic formulation of it is most pertinent:

Speak yee who best can tell, ye Sons of Light,
Angels, for yee behold him, and with songs
And chorale symphonies, Day without Night,
Circle his Throne rejoicing, yee in Heav'n;
On Earth join all ye Creatures to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.

(PL, V. 160–65)

And, from Milton again, the Son's words to the Father:

Then shall thy Saints unmixt, and from th' impure
Far separate, circling thy holy Mount
Unfeigned Halleluiahs to thee sing,
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.

(PL, VI. 742–45)

Such a reference appears all the more possible in the light of Christ's own contrasting of the "eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men" with those "which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Mat. 19:12). Pope's castrati are obviously of the first sort, as is everyone else who is in any way connected with the Hanoverian court; they are thus appropriately contrasted
with the wise man who, recalling the lessons taught Boethius by his Lady Philosophy, rejects the false values of the world and "bids thee face with steady view/ Proud Fortune, and look shallow Greatness thro" (107-8). Pope's personal repudiation of the ways of the court cleverly turns his exclusion from Queen Caroline's Merlin's Cave into a voluntary escape from the lair of the king of beasts and into a consequently virtuous quest for wisdom (115-19).

Having thus categorically disposed of the source of England's corruption and perversion, Pope is now free to turn his attention to the recipients of it, the English public:

Well, if a King's a Lion, at the least
The People are a many-headed Beast:
Can they direct what measures to pursue,
Who know themselves so little what to do?
Alike in nothing but one Lust of Gold,
Just half the land would buy, and half be sold:
Their Country's wealth our mightier Misers drain
Or cross, to plunder Provinces, the Main:
The rest, some farm the Poor-box, some the Pews;
Some keep Assemblies, and wou'd keep the Stews;
Some with fat Bucks on childless Dotards fawn;
Some win rich Widows by their Chine and Brawn;
While with the silent growth of ten per Cent,
In Dirt and darkness hundreds stink content.

(120-33)

The distinction between ruler and ruled does not exist in Horace's poem; his diatribe is against a generalized "Populus Romanus" (67), and the section (73-77) that corresponds to the lines quoted from Pope is merely a continuation of it. The separation of the government from the people is directly traceable to the commentators' expansions:

Olim quod vulpes aegroto cauta leoni] . . . L'application qu'Horace fait de cette fable est très-ingenieuse et très-solide. Le Lion c'est la Republique, & le Gouvernement;
Pope has followed this distinction and its logical consequent in Dacier's succeeding note by making George the lion and the people the many-headed beast. These metaphors further associate them quite specifically with George's sinful character; the "many-headed Beast" that they are described as inescapably links them with the apocalyptic beast with many heads:

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. (Rev. 13:1-2).

The image is a conventional one, and had been similarly used by many poets and pamphleteers before Pope. He himself had previously, and more explicitly, so characterized the mob in his Epistle to Augustus:

There still remains to mortify a Wit,
The many-headed Monster of Pit.

While all its throats the Gallery extends,
And all the Thunder of the Pit ascends!

(304-5; 326-27)

This satanic beast is associated with George qua devil not only through its possession of aspects of both bear and lion but also through such other biblical images as the
Petrine "devil, as a roaring lion . . . seeking whom he may devour" (Peter 5:8)—which, of course, has been precisely George's role in lines 115-18 of the poem. George and his subjects are united even more definitively in their diabolical natures by the exegetes' interpretation of the beast's seven heads as symbolizing the seven deadly sins.\(^2^3\) Just as George was earlier described as the epitome and exponent of those vices, so now the people, in an ever-widening circle of corruption, assume that same role, and with it its consequent guilt and apostasy. Like George, they too become primarily characterized by avarice: "Alike in nothing but one Lust of Gold" (124). Within the confines of that one representative vice, they are depicted, as are all of Pope's sinners, as the exemplification of total discord by the divergence of their pursuits, a fact that is emphasized by Pope's careful repetition of the word "some" with varying verbs (128-31). Warburton's note provides the key to the political corruption that consistently accompanies this moral degeneracy:

Their Country's wealth our mightier Misers drain,] The undertakers for advancing Loans to the Public on the Funds. They have been commonly accused of making it a job. But in so corrupt times, the fault is not always to be imputed to a Ministry: it having been found, on trial, that the wisest and most virtuous citizen of this or any other age, with every requisite talent in such matters, and supported by all the weight an honest Administration could afford him, was, they say, unable to abolish this inveterate mystery of iniquity.\(^2^4\)

The remainder of the paragraph employs a familiar Popean technique; it forms a scale of increasing depravity, starting with the materialism and immorality of those who "wou'd keep the Stews" (129), proceeding on to the corporeality of those who "with fat Bucks on childless Dotards fawn" (130) and the literal flesh-trading of those who "win rich Widows by their Chine and Brawn" (131), to end in the fungous insensibility of sinners who "In Dirt and darkness
... stink content” (133). All these are the chaotically confused citizens of England whose opinions Pope must reject because they “know themselves so little what to do” (123).

The next verse paragraph develops all these ideas even further through an elaborate satiric inversion of the scriptural Job:

Of all these ways, if each pursues his own,
Satire be kind, and let the wretch alone.
But show me one, who has it in his pow’r
To act consistent with himself an hour.
Sir Job sail’d forth, the evening bright and still,
“No place on earth (he cry’d) like Greenwich hill!”
Up starts a Palace, lo! th’ obedient base
Slopes at its foot, the woods its sides embrace,
The silver Thames reflects its marble face.
Now let some whimzy, or that Dev’l within
Which guides all those who know not what they mean
But give the Knight (or give his Lady) spleen;
“Away, away! take all your scaffolds down,
“For Snug’s the word: My dear! we’ll live in Town.”

Here, as in his other use of a satiric anti-Job figure in the Epistle to Bathurst, Pope is playing his satiric creation against the traditional image of Job. The Old Testament character had become almost identified with patience, charity, and contempt for wealth; in addition, he was one of the few Gentile worshippers of the true God.25 Like Sir Balaam of the Bathurst, whom Satan “tempts by making rich, not making poor,” Sir Job reverses the pattern of the biblical Job by allowing himself to be corrupted by wealth. He is a paradigm of the interior disharmony of the rich, a man who finds it impossible “to act consistent with himself an hour” (137). His changing fancy clashes tellingly with the steadfastness and patience of the biblical Job; like him,
Sir Job is described as a rich man (Horace's *Dives* [81]), but the English sinner distinctly lacks the spiritual wealth of the Old Testament saint. His corruption is mirrored not only in his inconsistency but also in the fact that he abandons the country ("Greenwich Hill" [139]) to "live in Town" (147); in the light of Pope's exploitation of the town-country opposition in his *Imitation* of Ep.II.ii, this must be viewed as yet another in the series of sinful inversions of man's proper duties, the deliberate choice of the occasion of maximum temptation and sin over the best possible locus for proper cultivation of the soul. Pope carefully defines both the source and the nature of Sir Job's perversion and discord (and, consequently, that of all the poem's other sinners) in the triplet that describes his motivation (143-45). The Horatian original of this is the succinct "Cui si vitiosa Libido/ fecerit auspiciun" (82-83), and the commentaries on these lines are helpful in illuminating Pope's adaptation:

Cui si vitiosa libido fecerit auspiciun] On ne sauroit trouver d'expression plus heureuse, ni qui contienne plus de sens & plus de raison. Mais il faut la bien faire entendre. *Vitiosa libido*, un désir vicieux, c'est-à-dire un désir corrompu, qui vient du caprice, du dégoût & du déréglement, & non pas de la nécessité. Celui qui a ce désir, *laborat suo vitio*, & non pas *vitio rerum*, comme Horace s'explique dans la Satire II, du Livre I. Par exemple, ce Riche, dont il est ici question, cherche un beau lieu pour bâtir: on lui parle de Baies, il est ravi: il va donc retresser la mer par les fondemens d'un Palais magnifique. Ces fondemens ne sont pas plutôt jettez, que son inconstance & le déréglement de son esprit le portent à se dégoûter de la mer, & à souhaiter d'avoir dans la terre ferme. Voilà un désir vicieux, parce qu'il ne vient pas de la nature. Et comme tous les désirs, qui viennent de notre corruption, nous sont plus chers, & ont plus de force que ceux qu'excite la vertu, l'amour propre nous les déguise sous des apparences trompeuses, & nous leur obéissons comme à une nécessité, ou plutôt comme à une autorité absoluè qui prend dans notre coeur la place de la Religion. C'est pourquoi
Horace dit, *fecerit auspicium*, que ces désirs corrompus sont les auspices que suit cet inconstant, & qui régissent toute sa conduite. Ses désirs sont le Dieu auquel il obéit. Virgile, qui était aussi grand Philosophe que grand Poète, a expliqué admirablement les deux principes de toutes nos actions, dans ces vers du IX. Livre de l’Enéide, où Nisus dit:

—Diine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt,
Euryale, an sua cuique Deus fit dira cupidio?

“Eurylus, sont-ce les Dieux qui nous inspirent cette ardeur? ou nos propres désirs prennent-ils dans notre cœur la place d’un Dieu”? 26

Dacier thus identifies the action of Horace’s *Dives* as a parody of religion, an immoral substitution of the dictates of his own will for the will of God. Pope’s reference to “that Dev’il within” (143), which the index guides link with *vitiosa Libido* (82), shows that he is working in terms of the same conception; Sir Job is inspired by Satan rather than resisting his devices as did his biblical original; where the Gentile Job followed the true God, his English anti-type obeys Satan and falls into the idolatry of avarice. The extent of the perversion becomes clearer when the promptings of “that Dev’il within” are contrasted with the virtuous dictates of “That God of Nature, who, within us still,/ Inclines our Action, not constrains our Will” (Ep.II.ii., 280–81). God urges man toward stability; the world and the devil call him to multiplicity and confusion. Warburton’s note on these lines enters into the spirit of the satire and ironically points out what Pope is doing by denying that he has done it:

*Now let some whimsy, & c.] This is very spirited, but much inferior to the elegance of the original,*

Cui si vitiosa Libido
Fecerit auspicium

which alluding to the religious manners of that time, no modern imitation can reach.27

[169]
Pope elaborates this inversion even beyond its explicit attribution to the devil. His very next line echoes Christ’s last words and couples the avaricious with those who crucified him: “that Devil within/ Which guides all those who know not what they mean” (143–44). Their guiding principles flow from the same source, the Satan who was traditionally recognized as attempting to imitate God and who achieved only a grotesque parody of him. George and his subjects are the disciples of Satan, and their earthly kingdom is consequently in all points a travesty of God’s spiritual dominion.

The final paragraph of the confirmatio adds one more element to the antireligion—a “martyr” (151) who is just as much an inversion as the “saving doctrine” of London—before going on to apply all of its previous charges to the poor:

At am’rous Flavio is the Stocking thrown?
That very night he longs to lye alone.
The Fool whose Wife elopes some thrice a quarter,
For matrimonial Solace dies a martyr.
Did ever Proteus, Merlin, any Witch,
Transform themselves so strangely as the Rich?
“Well, but the Poor”—the Poor have the same itch:
They change their weekly Barber, weekly News,
Prefer a new Japanner to their shoes,
Discharge their Garrets, move their Beds, and run
(They know not whither) in a Chaise and one;
They hire their Sculler, and when once abroad,
Grow sick, and damn the Climate—like a Lord.

(148-60)

All the inconsistency and discord of the rich are concentrated in the comparison of their actions to the transformations of “Proteus, Merlin, any Witch” (152): all three references agree in attributing their vagaries to satanic influence. The final line of the triplet that contains this
charge applies it in toto to the poor: "the Poor have the same itch" (154). The paragraph then goes on to catalogue their inconsistencies and disharmony and to link them morally with the anti-Christian wealthy by a mutation of Christ's words—"They know not whither" (158) they go. Just as the rich have substituted their own whims for God's law, so too the poor usurp God's final prerogative and take their own will for his judgment; they "damn . . . like a Lord" (160). The ambiguity of the final word is quite pertinent. The poor are like earthly lords in their sin and their discord; they are like them also in their identical attempt to emulate their heavenly lord in exercising absolute dominion in themselves. What they achieve is only a further elaboration of the already established satanic parody of God's order, which has been the central concern of the poem thus far.

All these various details of the anti-religion have been present in the poem by implication from the very first paragraph of the confirmatio.

'Tis the first Virtue, Vices to abhor;  
And the first Wisdom, to be Fool no more.  
But to the world, no bugbear is so great,  
As want of figure, and a small Estate.  
To either India see the Merchant fly,  
Scar'd at the spectre of pale Poverty!  
See him, with pains of body, pangs of soul,  
Burn through the Tropic, freeze beneath the Pole!  
Wilt thou do nothing for a nobler end,  
Nothing, to make Philosophy thy friend?  
To stop thy foolish views, thy long desires,  
And ease thy heart of all that it admires?  

(65-76)

This passage obviously opposes the views of the world and those of Wisdom in exactly the same way that its successors contrast Wisdom's voice with London's. In point of fact,
“Wisdom” (66) and “Philosophy” (74) here are probably the very same female figure that appears in lines 77-78; Lady Philosophy was but another one of her many guises.30 Even beyond this, however, it is quite significant that Pope alters the tribulations of his greedy merchants from Horace’s “Per mare . . . fugiens, per saxa, per ignes” (46) to the contents of his lines 71-72. “Pains of body, pangs of soul,” burning and freezing—these summarize the punishments of hell in orthodox Christian tradition. Pope’s argument appears to be equally orthodox; sinners constitute their own hell, and are able to make for themselves a hell on earth. Implied in this is the whole satanic inversion of heaven and heaven’s rule that Milton has elaborated throughout Paradise Lost and that Pope here adapts to his own needs.

In the Bolingbroke, Pope has pictured his England as very nearly a miniature Inferno: the concentric rings of corruption spread outward from a vicious and devil-like king, through court and nobles, through rich and poor, to encompass the entire life of the nation. Beast-king, the incarnation of sin, rules the Hydra-mob. Against this stand only the calm disengagement of the nil admirari argument of this paragraph’s last lines (75-76) and the saving counsels of Wisdom.

II

Pope himself appears in the poem as the embattled champion of those counsels, as a man struggling in a hostile world to form in himself the image of Wisdom. From the very beginning of the poem, he has opposed himself to the chaos of the Hanoverian world and has taken pains to specify the nature of the alternative he has chosen. The poem’s exordium presents his general situation.

[172]
ST. JOHN, whose love indulg'd my labours past
Matures my present, and shall bound my last!
Why will you break the Sabbath of my days?
Now sick alike of Envy and of Praise.
Publack too long, ah let me hide my Age!
See modest Cibber now has left the Stage:
Our Gen'rls now, retir'd to their Estates,
Hang their old Trophies o'er the Garden gates,
In Life's cool evening satiate of applause,
Nor fond of bleeding, ev'n in brunswick's cause.

A voice there is, that whispers in my ear,
('Tis Reason's voice, which sometimes one can hear)
"Friend Pope! be prudent, let your Muse take breath,
"And never gallop Pegasus to death;
"Lest stiff, and stately, void of fire, or force,
"You limp, like Blackmore, on a Lord Mayor's horse."

Farewell then Verse, and Love, and ev'ry Toy,
The Rhymes and rattles of the Man or Boy:
What right, what true, what fit, we justly call,
Let this be all my care—for this is All:
To lay this harvest up, and hoard with haste
What ev'ry day will want, and most, the last.

(1-22)

In Horace's rendering, this epistle falls somewhere between the categories of praise of the retired, contemplative life and denunciation of materialistic values. In Pope's hands, these themes are basically unchanged, but they are substantially reoriented. This can be seen initially in the substitution of Bolingbroke, the self-exiled leader of the opposition, for Horace's Maecaenas, the firm adherent of the court and trusted friend of Augustus. Pope's work, as he defiantly asserts, has been and will continue to be produced under Bolingbroke's aegis; thus from the beginning he identifies his Imitation as an anticourt poem. This emphasis is lightly carried through the remainder of the
paragraph by a series of careful citations. Line 6 touches on “modest Cibber,” George’s laureate, and, as many of Pope’s poems claim, the king in wit as he in state. The mention of English generals’ “old Trophies” (8) is a none too subtle thrust at Walpole’s peace policy; and the final, pointed mention of “Brunswick’s cause” (10) constitutes a direct slap at George’s German origins and leanings. Lest the point of this last be missed, Warburton has appended a somewhat heavy-handed note calling attention to it:

\[ ev'n in Brunswick's cause\] In the former Editions it was Britain's cause. But the terms are synonymous.\[31\]

Needless to say, very few Englishmen in the 1730’s would have found either the names or the interests of Brunswick and Britain identical.

All this, however, is submerged beneath the overriding concern of this first paragraph, which is the idea of retirement, after a long and active life, to prepare for death. This emphasis is present in several places—“shall bound my last” (2), “the Sabbath of my days” (3), “retir’d” (7), “In Life’s cool evening” (9)—but most explicitly in Pope’s cry, “Publick too long, ah let me hide my Age” (5). His mention of “the Sabbath of my days” (3) is important both for the religious connotations of the Sabbath (traditionally and scripturally, of course, the day completely devoted to the worship of God) and for other implications that Warburton’s note somewhat clarifies:

\[ Sabbath of my days?\] i.e. The 49th year, the age of the Author.\[32\]

Warburton’s remark is to be understood, I think, in the light of the doctrine of the climacteric years, the belief that man’s life fell into crucial periods determined by multiples of seven and nine: the forty-ninth and the sixty-third years were the most dangerous, both physically and morally, since body and soul were then more susceptible to destruction
through disease and through the agency of the passions. Pope’s concentration on the ideas of retirement and preparation for death takes on particular relevance when viewed from this standpoint and, linked with the Imitation’s interest in the sin of avarice, fits the entire poem into the context of the *ars moriendi* pattern of holy preparation for death and judgment. The tension between Pope’s desire for this quiet and Bolingbroke’s implied request that he re-enter a Hanoverian world of political and moral corruption supplies the stimulus for the whole epistle.

The second paragraph then elaborates one half of this conflict by presenting Reason as the poet’s counselor, urging him to abandon poetry and the active life for the sake of retirement and meditation (11–16). Pope remains strongly within the commentary tradition by identifying Horace’s unnamed voice as Reason, and at the same time introduces into his Imitation the personification who is in various manifestations (as Philosophy, as Wisdom) to embody the values he endorses. Her naming of Blackmore as the antithesis of proper poetic conduct serves as the poem’s first identification of its villains with the Whig, mercantile, city interests, who will be characterized as the exponents of avarice. The contrast of Pope’s “Pegasus” (140) with Blackmore’s “Lord Mayor’s horse” (16) is also the first indication of the poem’s mode of argument, that overmuch attention to the active life is in itself almost sinful and leads inevitably to an inversion of the proper order of things, to the production of discord rather than harmony. Thus Blackmore’s verse is described as discordant, “stiff, and stately, void of fire, or force” (15)—a fact that Pope’s note emphasizes by paraphrasing his own line as “stiff, and not strong; stately and yet dull. . . .”  

The remainder of the exordium is devoted to summing up Pope’s general position: he will abandon poetry and the other “rhymes and rattles” (18) of the active life, and devote himself to “What right, what true, what fit, we justly call” (19). Significantly, many commentators had
identified the Horatian original of this line ("Quid verum atque decens" [11]) with moral philosophy and ethics, some even making the specific distinction between theory and practice with reference to the active and contemplative lives;\textsuperscript{36} this provides a piece of background valuable for its indications of the already close association of Horace's poem with the ideas Pope grafts onto it. Pope's list of interests, however, seems to draw both its content and its relevance from a Pauline chapter that he employs again later in the epistle:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Phil. 4:8)

But more important than this is Pope's expansion of Horace's simple statement of concern for the pursuit of philosophy into an elaborate harvest metaphor that draws upon what must be termed a scriptural commonplace. Here is a New Testament instance of it:

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. (Luke 12:19-21)\textsuperscript{37}

Pope's intention clearly, is to "hoard" that "harvest" (21) that will render him "rich toward God." The opposition between material and spiritual wealth presents the basic thematic conflict of the epistle, and links it closely with the \textit{ars moriendi} tradition's resistance of the temptation to avarice, and with the general pattern and concern of that tradition, the eradication of earthly appetite and concentration on man's heavenly goal.

[176]
The poem's *narratio* (23-54) goes on from this point to explain Pope's specific circumstances and to indicate in greater detail his intentions.

Long, as to him who works for debt, the Day;
Long as the Night to her whose love's away;
Long as the Year's dull circle seems to run,
When the brisk Minor pants for twenty-one;
So slow th'unprofitable Moments roll,
That lock up all the Functions of my soul;
That keep me from Myself; and still delay
Life's instant business to a future day:
That task, which as we follow, or despise,
The eldest is a fool, the youngest wise;
Which done, the poorest can no wants endure,
And which not done, the richest must be poor.

Late as it is, I put myself to school,
And feel some comfort, not to be a fool.
Weak tho' I am of limb, and short of sight,
Far from a Lynx, and not a Giant quite,
I'll do what MEAD and CHESELDEN advise,
To keep these limbs, and to preserve these eyes.
Not to go back, is somewhat to advance,
And men must walk at least before they dance.

(35-54)

Pope identifies his concern as an explicitly spiritual activity; he seeks to release and use "all the Functions of my soul" (40). He returns once again to the theme of riches, this time phrasing it in seemingly paradoxical terms:

That task, which as we follow, or despise,
The eldest is a fool, the youngest wise;
Which done, the poorest can no wants endure,
And which not done, the richest must be poor.

(43-46)
The paradox resolves itself in terms of the conflict between earthly riches and spiritual wealth around which the poem revolves. Once again, Pope is making use of a biblical commonplace, although he appears at this point to be utilizing a specific formulation of it from Proverbs:

There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. (Prov. 13:7) 89

The exegetes make the obvious point that the riches in question are spiritual ones; it is equally clear that these are the only riches for which Pope is striving.

Pope has fitted his personal desire for spiritual growth into the context of *concordia discors* by comparing the duration of his delay to the progress of day, night, and year for various impatient hopefuls (35-40); the alternation of day and night and of the seasons of “the Year’s dull circle” (37) were understood as manifestations in nature of the immutable law of the reconciliation of opposites. What he seeks to attain by cultivation of the soul is Wisdom, which is itself a concord. Wisdom is both the mirror of God’s perfection and the pattern for his creation; since God’s being embraces and reconciles all contradictions, and since the structural and sustaining principle of the universe is the harmonious contention of opposing elements, Wisdom of necessity constitutes in herself a harmony. In conformity with his attempt to make himself “That Man divine whom Wisdom calls her own” (180), Pope has, at the opening of his epistle’s *narratio*, described himself as an exemplar of that harmony.

But ask not, to what Doctors I apply?  
Sworn to no Master, of no Sect am I:  
As drives the storm, at any door I knock,  
And house with Montagne now, or now with Lock.  
Sometimes a Patriot, active in debate,  
Mix with the World, and battle for the State,
Free as young Lyttleton, her cause pursue,
Still true to Virtue, and as warm as true:
Sometimes, with Aristippus, or St. Paul,
Indulge my Candor, and grow all to all;
Back to my native Moderation slide,
And win my way by yielding to the tyde.

(23-34)

Pope is the properly concordant man who is capable of reconciling in himself points of view as divergent as those of Montaigne and Locke, Aristippus and St. Paul; he transcends contradictions and “grow[s] all to all” (32). The harmony of his mind embraces natural knowledge in Aristippus and supernatural revelation in St. Paul (with consequent implications for the content of an epistle imitated from a poet writing according to the light of unaided reason). The reasons for the presence of Montaigne and Locke, of Lyttleton and St. Paul, can ultimately be found in Horace’s own vacillation between Stoic and Cyrenaic, and in the commentators’ understanding of that phenomenon. Landino is most explicit; he seizes upon Horace’s lines 14 through 19 as the opportunity for a brief disquisition on the active and contemplative lives, with general reference to the biblical Martha and Mary, who were the traditional exemplars of those two states. Pope’s “As drives the storm, at any door I knock,/ And house with Montagne now, or now with Lock” (25–26) presents these conflicting ways of life in the guise of a concord already achieved in his own practices. Warburton’s note quite plainly bears this out:

And house with Montagne now, and now with Locke,] i.e. Chuse either an active or a contemplative life, as is most fitted to the season and circumstances.—For he regarded these Writers as the best Schools to form a man for the world; or to give him a knowledge of himself: Montagne excelling in his observations on social and civil life; and Locke, in developing the faculties, and explaining the operations of the human mind.
The rest of the paragraph elaborates this basic idea. Lyttleton and the opposition represent the virtues of the active life; and while he is with them, it is Pope's task to "Mix with the World, and battle for the State" (28). Balanced against this is the life of retirement and contemplation, here represented by the moderation, passivity, and adaptability of Aristippus and St. Paul. The juncture of these two in Pope's own person defines him as a harmonic, properly ordered individual who is, moreover, fully discharging the Christian's duty to imitate Christ in leading the mixed life, combining the virtues of both active and retired states.42

Pope's intention, announced at the beginning of the Imitation, is to abandon the active, public career he has pursued up to this point in favor of the retired life of meditation; thus his final choice of opinions in this paragraph is that of St. Paul, to

Indulge my Candor, and grow all to all;
Back to my native Moderation slide,
And win my way by yielding to the tyde.

(32-34)

These lines detail more than the passivity and quiet of the contemplative state. They allude to and incorporate three related Pauline pronouncements, all describing his apostolic mission and the duty of the faithful:

I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. (I Cor. 9:22)

Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. (I Cor. 10:33)

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. (Phil. 4:5) 48

The submerged portions of the two texts from Corinthians, those parts of them that are not directly stated in Pope's [180]
poem but are nevertheless implied by the nature of allusion, both refer to Paul’s apostolic role, his task of bringing salvation to the sinful world. Pope is assimilating this also to the ideal character he is building for himself; his proposed retirement will not only be a simple life of contemplation, but will also directly concern itself with the work of salvation. So too is the Pauline moderation fitted into the context of the poem. Moderation demands temperance in all earthly appetites, and the Imitation of Ep.I.i. is heavily and precisely concerned with the disordering effects of avarice, the symbol of excess in all earthly desires. Furthermore, in the opinion of the exegetes, St. Paul’s moderation constituted a mean that avoided both excess and defect, and the mean is normal human manifestation of the divine concord. Thus Pope’s backsliding to his “native Moderation” (33), besides adding a facet to the apostolic persona he is establishing for himself, contributes yet another element to the concordant character he has described. It is this harmony, self-containment, and moderation that place Pope in such stark contrast to the avaricious and discordant world he depicts in the central section of his poem.

That discord is confined behind as well as before by the harmony of Pope’s persona. This character Pope resumes, immediately after the epistle’s confirmatio, in the lightly ironic bantering of the refutatio.

You laugh, half Beau half Sloven if I stand, My Wig all powder, and all snuff my Band; You laugh, if Coat and Breeches strangely vary, White Gloves, and Linnen worthy Lady Mary! But when no Prelate’s Lawn with Hair-shirt lin’d, Is half so incoherent as my Mind, When (each Opinion with the next at strife, One ebb and flow of follies all my Life) I plant, root up, I build, and then confound, Turn round to square, and square again to round; You never change one muscle of your face.
You think this Madness but a common case,
Nor once to Chanc'ry, nor to Hales apply;
Yet hang your lip, to see a Seam awry!
Careless how ill I with myself agree;
Kind to my dress, my figure, not to me.

(161-76)

In its rhetorical aspect, this passage functions as a humorous refutation of Bolingbroke’s errors and misconceptions about his friend, and as a rebuke to him for concentrating upon the surface appearances only. It links up with Pope’s opening demur at Bolingbroke’s implied request for more poetry and a consequent return to the active life. Thematically, it continues, now in a jocular vein, the representation of Pope’s character as a harmonization of opposites; he is “half Beau half Sloven” (61), even his clothing varies. The disorder is only the surface appearance by which Bolingbroke is misled; beneath lies a concordant reality. This is graphically revealed with regard to his “incoherent” (166) mind. The “strife” (167) and the “ebb and flow of follies” (168) are only seeming discords; actually, they express the underlying harmony of Pope’s soul. The “strife” is that concordant strife that is proper nature of man, who is himself, as Pope has explained in the Essay on Man, a concord of the opposed principles of passion and reason. Horace’s “Aestuat” (96), as the commentators point out and as Pope has adapted it, properly refers to the motion of the tides, which were themselves a natural manifestation of the workings of concordia discors; Pope’s use of this as metaphor for the processes of his thought brings them to share in that concord.

The line “I plant, root up, I build, and then confound” (169) also makes a superficial reference to his gardening and grotto at Twickenham as an example of the chaos of his life, but, at the same time, has submerged significance as an example of a divinely established harmony. It alludes to God’s commission to Jeremiah:

[182]
See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and plant. (Jer. 1:10)

This sets Pope in stark contrast to Walpole, the poem's antiprophet, and the government and doctrine he represents. Pope is the divine poet, a prophet sent to warn the world of its sins and to recall it to its true goal. It is significant, and quite fitting to Pope's theme, that the exegetes construed Jeremiah's rooting up and destroying as a divine command for the extirpation of carnal appetite in general and avarice in particular; this opposes Pope even more pointedly to Walpole and his mercantile world. St. Augustine glosses this passage in De Doctrina Christiana in the course of a discussion of figurative expression in the Bible that provides a dual relevance for his comments:

Therefore whatever is read in the Scriptures concerning bitterness or anger in the words or deeds of the person of God or of his saints is of value for the destruction of the reign of cupidity. . . . But it is said of Jeremias, "Lo, I have set thee this day over kingdoms, to root up, and to pull down, and to destroy." There is no doubt that this whole expression is figurative and is to be referred to that end of which we have spoken.

Those things which seem almost shameful to the inexperienced, whether simply spoken or actually performed either by the person of God or by men whose sanctity is commended to us, are all figurative, and their secrets are to be removed as kernels from the husk as nourishment for charity.

It is more than appropriate to Pope's context that his allusion should express "the destruction of the reign of cupidity"; it is also very fitting that Augustine should explain the biblical use of metaphor in almost exactly the same way Pope employs this one. The "almost shameful" surface statement of this line is one of confusion. It is ostensibly a confession of misdirection and error that, upon
examination, reveals as its metaphoric kernel a declaration of the harmony and holiness for which the poet is striving.

This allusion has important implications for Pope's conception of his own role as poet. He has already, by means of allusions to the Pauline epistles, endowed his poetic persona with some of the sanctity of the apostle. Now, in direct contrast to the false prophet Walpole, to whom a similar biblical passage was ironically applied, Pope has proclaimed himself God's own ordained poet, set "over nations and over kingdoms" to preach a Jeremiad to a fallen and hellish England and to announce to those who will listen the true goal and the proper concordant pattern for life. This ideal of concord is his own end also:

Is this my Guide, Philosopher, and Friend?
This, He who loves me, and who ought to mend?
Who ought to make me (what he can, or none,)
That Man divine whom Wisdom calls her own,
Great without Title, without Fortune bless'd,
Rich ev'n when plunder'd, honour'd while oppress'd,
Lov'd without youth, and follow'd without power,
At home tho' exil'd, free, tho' in the Tower.
In short, that reas'ning, high, immortal Thing,
Just less than Jove, and much above a King,
Nay half in Heav'n—except (what's mighty odd)
A Fit of Vapours clouds this Demi-god.

(177-88)

Sapientia, who has punctuated the poem as the virtuous alternative to "London's voice" (79), appears here in Pope's peroratio in the guise she has had in Western literature ever since, as Lady Philosophy, she rescued Boethius from his servitude to Fortune. Her role here is to save Pope from exactly the same fate, that slavery to earthly appetite for which avarice has been his metaphor; thus the list of achievements that Wisdom can produce includes all the gifts of Fortune—honor, wealth, power, love, freedom—
paradoxically without their contingent dependence upon mutable sublunary nature. The individual “whom Wisdom calls her own” is “That Man divine” (180) because he is concordant and, consequently, like Wisdom herself, mirrors the harmony of God; thus the characteristics that Pope seeks to attain and that Wisdom can give are presented as a concordia discors, a series of linked and reconciled opposites—greatness without position, wealth without material possessions, freedom even in prison. It is for this reason also that Pope here refers to Bolingbroke by the titles he gave him in the fourth epistle of the Essay on Man, “Guide, Philosopher, and Friend” (177). That work, and the fourth epistle of it in particular, had devoted itself to defining the nature of human happiness, and Pope’s conclusions there were exactly the same as they are here. Happiness does not consist in any sublunary good nor in any of the gifts of Fortune; rather “the perfection of Virtue and Happiness consists in a conformity to the Order of Providence here, and a Resignation to it here and hereafter. . . .” Since, as must be abundantly clear, Pope conceived of the order of Providence as the harmonic reconciliation of opposites, it is highly appropriate at this point in his Imitation, where he defines his goal as complete concord, to recall by means of this allusion that this concord constitutes the highest and truest reach of human happiness. As he states it in the final lines of this poem, the goal of all this striving is to make man “that reasoning, high immortal Thing,/ Just less than Jove . . . / Nay half in Heav’n” (185–87); that is to say, to make him a proper, spiritually oriented human being, as opposed to the animality of George and his followers. Man’s dual nature, both corporeal and spiritual, is capable of development in either direction, according to the ends the individual chooses to serve. Pope’s decision to follow Wisdom has resulted in his becoming a reflection of the concord of God’s nature, in total contrast to the inverted satanic order that the adherents of avarice reflect. Unlike George and the worldly, who by their sin
have become literally demonic, Pope has made himself a "Demi-god" (188), and has triumphed completely over the material world that holds them in thrall. This is the "Candor" (32)—in its root meaning—that Pope wished to indulge: the brightness of the Wisdom who, as he said in the Fortescue, reflects the beauty of God in creation and art, the Wisdom who is "the brightness (candor) of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God’s majesty."

Viewed in this light, the final line of the Bolingbroke becomes richly ambiguous. Its surface statement is completely Horatian in spirit, poking fun at the grandiose ambitions of mere man, who remains forever tightly bound by the limitations of his bodily self; in this respect, it refers obviously to Pope’s own infirmities and weaknesses. Perhaps it also jokingly alludes to the clouds and vapors that fog the comings and goings of Homeric gods and goddesses. More seriously, it describes the Old Testament and Miltonic God whose brightness is hidden by a veil of cloud. Most seriously, and most certainly, it points directly to the biblical descriptions of Wisdom:

I [Wisdom] made that in the heavens there should rise light that never faileth, and as a cloud I covered all the earth. I dwelt in the highest places, and my throne is in a pillar of a cloud. (Ecclus. 24:6-7)

And again:

For she is a vapour of the power of God and a certain pure emanation of the glory of almighty God: and therefore no defiled thing cometh into her. For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God’s majesty, and the image of his goodness. And being but one, she can do all things: and remaining in herself the same, she reneweth all things and through nations conveyeth herself into holy souls. She maketh the friends of God and prophets. (Wisdom of Solomon 7:25-27)

In the same ironic, self-deprecating mode as the previous part of this paragraph, this final line constitutes a state-
ment of the goal for which Pope is working and of the mission he has undertaken. Wisdom has made him a friend and a prophet of God; he seeks now to perfect her image in himself, and consequently to assimilate himself completely to God. The Bolingbroke completes the journey begun in the Fortescue: there Pope sought to realize the image of Wisdom in his art; here, in his valediction to poetry, he finds her in himself.

Like the allusions to St. Paul and to Jeremiah, Pope’s present incorporation of sapiential theology has far-reaching implications for his theory of poetry. Just as those references cast the poet into the role of the Christian preacher, the idea of Sapientia, as Pope uses it, transforms the poet into a creator of God’s own order, a “Demi-god” who reproduces in himself and his works the pattern of God’s own creation. The entire poem, like one of Pope’s antithetical couplets, resolves itself into a harmonious balance of conflicting opposites, ending in a vision of the creator-poet’s final assimilation into the being of the God who is the reconciliation of all contradictions and the allaying of all paradoxes. Pope’s opening reference to “the Sabbath of my days” is not a chance choice of phrase, but a deliberate approximation, within the conventions of *ars moriendi* and the retired life, of the creator-poet’s character to that of the divine creator. Both have labored and seen that their creations were good; the rest from active life that Pope now seeks is that period of final preparation for the ultimate confrontation of human maker and divine.

From this perspective, even the St. John whose love presided over the beginning of the poem grows richly multivalent, recalling that other St. John whose Love was God, and whose God was the Word through whom all things were made. Perhaps it is this conception that underlies Pope’s whole view of the craft of poetry: the idea that God too is a poet, a creator through the agency of the Word. Clearly, this is no mere truism for him, but a living truth that clothes his calling with the mantle of divinity. His
references to poets as prophets, apostles, as the Messiah himself, are too frequent, too consistent, to be mere rhetoric. Both poetry and poets, he insists, are formed by Wisdom: the artifact mirrors God's creation, and the artist mirrors God.

III

Pope's final attempt at direct imitation of Horace thus links itself coherently with the poem from which he began. *To Bolingbroke* is the inevitable conclusion of the themes and theories of his *Imitation of Sat. II.i.*, the final condemnation of his degenerate times, the fullest statement of the Christian poet's goal, and the inescapable culmination of his idea of poetry. In the seriousness of its view of Augustan England, it marks the penultimate stage in a progression from the bantering at folly of the *Fortescue* and the early *Dunciad* to the sombre, apocalyptical tones of *Dunciad IV*. Pope seems to have seen clearly that his art was among the fullest expressions of Renaissance culture and, as such, was simultaneously among the final expressions of that culture: the high tide of Renaissance classicism must inevitably be followed by the ebb. The perfection of Pope's forms, the clarity and richness of his verse, achieve in the face of oncoming chaos a posture of stability; they create of the materials of complete disorder a shapely illusion of tragic beauty that, in our time, Yeats would have understood.

Eighteenth-century neoclassicism, at least as it is manifested in Pope, is no more a matter of mere form, and no nearer a return to paganism, than was the Renaissance rediscovery of classical culture. Both are the process and the result of the interpenetration of Christian idea and classical motif, ancient form and modern meaning. The roots of Pope's poetry, and particularly of his use of classical matter in verse, stretch deep into the Renaissance and into the
culture and spirit the Renaissance fostered. Even his idea of poetic composition is essentially a Renaissance one, which can be found formulated in someone as distant in time and space as Torquato Tasso:

Yet for all that, the world, which includes in its bosom so many and so diverse things, is one, one in its form and essence, one the knot with which its parts are joined and bound together in discordant concord; and while there is nothing lacking in it, yet there is nothing there that does not serve either for necessity or ornament. I judge that in the same way the great poet (who is called divine for no other reason but that, because he resembles in his works the supreme architect, he comes to participate in his divinity) is able to form a poem in which as in a little world can be read in one passage how armies are drawn up, and in various others there are battles by land and sea, attacks on cities, skirmishes, duels, jousts, descriptions of hunger and thirst, tempests, conflagrations, prodigies; there are a variety of celestial and infernal councils, and the reader encounters seditions, discords, wanderings, adventures, incantations, works of cruelty, audacity, courtesy, and generosity, and actions of love, now unhappy, now happy, now pleasing, now causing compassion. Yet in spite of all, the poem that contains so great variety of matter is one, one is its form and its soul; and all these things are put together in such a way that one has relation to the other, one corresponds to the other, the one necessarily or apparently so depends on the other that if one part is taken away or changed in position the whole is destroyed. And if this is true, the art of composing a poem is like the nature of the universe, which is composed of contraries, such as appear in the law of music, for if there were no multiplicity there would be no whole, and no law, as Plotinus says.55

This, manifestly, is what Pope has accomplished. For this purpose, the Renaissance Horace has served him well, providing a concordant mixture of rational knowledge and supernatural revelation, reason and faith in harmonious balance, and offering as well all the advantages of applying ancient rules to modern actions. Within the expansive
bounds of his traditions, Pope has built the various, yet one, universe of great poetry; it is entirely fitting that the last Imitation should close with his own acknowledgement of his accomplishment on the Sabbath of that creation.

1. P. 232 verso.

2. P. 67 recto, second pagination.

3. Dacier's commentary looms far larger in this poem than that of any other critic. Consequently it is a fact of great significance that in this poem alone information is provided indicating some of the sources Pope utilized. Warburton's note to line 95, quoted in chapter I, needs to be repeated here: “Dacier laughs at an able Critic, who was scandalized, that the antient Scholiasts had not explained what Horace meant by a wall of brass; for, says Dacier, 'Chacun se fait des difficultez a sa mode, et demande des remarques proportionnees a son goit:' he then sets himself in good earnest about this important inquiry; and, by a passage in Vegetius, luckily discovers, that it signified an old veteran armed cap-a-pie in brass, and placed to cover his Fellow. Our Poet has happily served himself of this impertinence to convey a very fine stroke of satire.” Warburton is, of course, quite clearly stating that Pope has taken advantage of one of Dacier's suggestions to embellish his poem. Beyond this, however, there is a Scriblerus-like quality to his comment which would have been readily apparent to an age well acquainted with both Horace and Dacier. Not only is the point Warburton annotates so minor and so self-evident that the reference to Dacier seems gratuitous, but he has also garbled (I would suggest deliberately) the note he purports to be reproducing: “Un habile Critique a trouve mauvais qu'on n'eut pas rechercher pourquoi Horace avoit dit, une muraille d'airain: car chacun se fait des difficultez a sa mode, & demande des remarques proportionnees a son goit. Il a donc voulu faire lui-meme cette penible recherche; & aisant l'hureusement un passage de Vegece, qui appelle une muraille d'airain des Soldats armez de pied en cap, qui couvrent les autres, il a cru que c'etoit son veritable fait, & que la muraille d'airain de Vegece etoit la meme que celle d'Horace. Mais rien n'est plus eloigne. Il ne falloit pas beaucoup creuser pour trouver que les Anciens disoient des murailles d'airain ou de fer, pour des murailles tres-fortes. C'est ainsi que Virgile a dit—Cyclopum educata caminis/Moenia. Des murailles sorties des fourneaux des Cyclopes. Et dans un autre endroit:—stat terrea turris ad auras.” Dacier's actual opinion coincides with Warburton's, and Warburton has in reality translated a good part of Dacier's note and passed it off as his own. It appears obvious from the accuracy of that portion of this note that Warburton quotes, as well as from the part of it that he has silently incorporated into his commentary, that he had his edition of Dacier near at hand, if not open before him. The confusion cannot then be attributed to slipshod scholarship, but rather to the intimate knowledge of an editor-friend who is using this self-evident fraud to call the reader's attention to an important influence on Pope's poem.

4. In point of fact, Horace's was closely associated with the Christian formulation, and may have influenced it. See Morton W. Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins (East Lansing, Michigan, 1952), pp. 37, 45-46, and 72.

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5. P. 68 verso, second pagination.

6. Pope had already utilized this tradition in the *Epistle to Bathurst*; see Wasserman, *Bathurst*, p. 21.


8. I here quote the Douai translation, since it more closely approximates Pope's phrasing. See also in this connection Prov. 3: 14 and Prov. 8: 10-11; in the latter chapter, Wisdom is depicted as crying "at the gates, at the entry of the city" (Prov. 8: 3).


10. VI, 372-73.

11. VI, 363.


14. Acron, Porphyrian, and Cruquius' *Vetus Commentator*, all agree in pointing out that the forum of Janus formerly stood on the site now occupied by the Basilica of St. Paul. In light of this fact, Pope's assigning to its English counterpart, St. Paul's Cathedral, a place in the antireligion becomes a sharp reversal of the spread of the gospel; false religion, after temporarily retreating, once again claims its own. See *Opera cum quatuor Commentariis*, p. 235 recto, and Cruquius, p. 510.


16. See Butt's note to line 22 of *Dialogus I*, TE, IV, 299.

17. The quoted text is from the Douai translation. In his exegesis of Jer. 1: 10, Cornelius à Lapide acknowledges and quotes Horace's *murus aheneus*; see *Commentaria*, pt. II, p. 577.

18. P. 235 verso.

19. Cornelius à Lapide, pt. XV, p. 308, and Matthew Poole, IV, col. 1196. Lapide also associates "spirit and truth" with the active and contemplative lives.

20. If any identification of Bug is necessary, I would suggest Lord Hervey who, as Pope's favorite enemy, is otherwise conspicuously absent from this poem, and who, moreover, was similarly characterized in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* as "this Bug with gilded wings" (309).

21. Dacier, VI 383-84. Pope's use of the word "Reynard," which Butt attributes to the influence of Creech's translation, could just as easily have come from this note of Dacier's.

22. *Ibid.*, 384: "Belua multorum es capitum] Le peuple n'est pas seulement un Lion, c'est un monstre à plusieurs têtes, qui ne sont jamais animées par le même esprit."

24. IV, 115.

25. See Wasserman, Bathurst, pp. 49-51.

26. Dacier, VI, 388.

27. IV, 116-17.

28. Merlin was, according to Arthurian tradition, sired by a demon, and mythographers frequently ascribe Proteus' ability to change his shape and appearance to the same sort of diabolical origin: see Alexander Ross, Mystagogus Poeticus (London, 1653), pp. 371-72, and Natale Conti, Mythologiae, p. 443, col. 2.

29. Dacier compares the first two lines of this paragraph to an unidentifiable locus in St. Jerome: "Et sapientia prima stultitia caruisse] Le commencement de la sagesse c'est d'être exempt de toute sorte de folie... La science & l'ignorsance font la même chose à l'esprit. S. Jerome a vot avec ce passage d'Horace quand il écrivait, Prima namque sapientis est caruisse stultitia; sed stultitia caruisse non potest, nisi qui intellexerit illam" (VI, 369). Similar statements, however, may be found in Job 28:28, "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding," and, in Prov. 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." All this demonstrates once again the correspondence of pagan and Christian opinions in the Renaissance view, and indicates the kind of specifically religious coloration of the traditional Horace.

30. See Singleton, loc. cit.

31. IV, 101. In former editions it read "Br—'s cause."

32. IV, 100.

33. On climacteric years, see Lynn Thorndike, History of Magic and Experimental Science (New York, 1958), VI, 139-40, and VII, 92, 110, 189. See also Claudius Salmasius, De Annis Climactericis (Leyden, 1648), second and fourth pages of the synopsis, and pp. 57-59. Although attempting to explode the theory, Salmasius presents all its tenets in great detail.

34. See for instance Ascensius, p. 67 recto, second pagination, and Dacier, VI, 350.

35. Attributed by Butt to Pope, TE, IV, 279, but it appears to be Warburton's comment (IV, 102).

36. See Dacier, VI, 352, and Landino, pp. 233 verso-233 verso.

37. See also Gen. 41:35-36; Job 22:22; Prov. 10:14; Matt. 6:19-20; II Tim. 4:8; James 5:3.

38. It is interesting, as an indication of how traditional even Pope's rhetorical practices are, to note that Cruquius identifies Horace's lines 11 and 12 as epilogus proemi and protasis narrationis respectively; this is exactly the manner in which Pope employs their English equivalents. See Cruquius, p. 513, col. 1.
39. See also Prov. 10:22; 11:24; and 14:24. Instances of this sort might be multiplied indefinitely; the basic idea is so common in scripture that the simple statement of the apparent paradox would appear to be sufficient to call to mind its religious implications.

40. 234 verso.

41. IV, 102-3.

42. So at least Pope's friend Atterbury understood the Christian's duty. See "Of Religious Retirement: A Sermon Preach'd before the Queen at St. Jame's Chapel, on Friday, March 23, 1704/5," in Francis Atterbury, Sermons and Discourses on Several Subjects and Occasions (London 1740), I, 347-75.

43. All three are noted by Butt, TE, IV, 281.

44. Whitby, II, 402-3.

45. See Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, p. 88: "'There is,' as we may remember from Pico, 'this diversity between God and man, that God contains in him all things because he is their source, whereas man contains in him all things because he is their centre.' In the centre the opposites are held in balance, but in the source they coincide. In so far as man therefore approaches his own perfection, he distantly imitates the deity. Balance is but an echo of divine transcendence."


47. Dacier, VI, 395.


50. See The Consolation of Philosophy, book II, for a situation almost exactly parallel to the one presented in lines 180-86 of Pope's poem.

51. I quote from Pope's "Argument of the Fourth Epistle," TE, III, pt. i, p. 127. In section VI of that epistle, Pope specifically rejects the gifts of Fortune as sources of happiness; see lines 167-308.

52. It is important to note in this connection that the exegetes associated the figure of Sapientia as a cloud or vapor with the spirit that brooded over the abyss in Genesis, and consequently linked her, in this form particularly, with God's creative activity. See, for instance, Cornelius a Lapide, pt. V, p. 509.
